

**AMENDMENT 2006
JEROME COUNTY IDAHO
WUI INTERFACE
FIRE MITIGATION PLAN
JUNE 2006**

When the Jerome County Fire Mitigation Plan Team initially prepared our fire mitigation plan for Jerome County, Idaho, the focus was on individual homeowners, existing subdivisions, fire resources and equipment that were present for fire prevention. There was an overall focus on existing resources in proximity to the dominant vegetative type of the county which is range grassland and farm land. While the habitat has not changed, population growth, City and county fire districts and resource needs have changed dramatically.

Because of the need to amend and update our existing fire mitigation plan and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) maps for Jerome County, our team met in November, 2005 and charted a collaborative effort to receive input for this amendment. Our collaborative effort has resulted in new planning, WUI map updating and mitigation needs documentation directed not only at individual cities and communities but also rangelands, farmlands, subdivision areas at high risk from fire, educational needs and new grant funding needs.

After the Jerome County Fire Mitigation Plan was completed in 2004, new national legislation, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) was passed by Congress. Based on this new legislation, our Jerome County Fire Mitigation Plan Team defined our “Wildland Urban Interface”, with the cooperation of federal and state fire management agencies and HFRA definitions.

We decided in November 2005 that a series of collaborative meetings were needed to update and change our Fire Mitigation Plan. These meetings began in February 2006 and continued through May 2006. We are very serious about our collaborative work with federal and state fire management agencies in accomplishing hazardous fuels reduction treatments, firesafe education, and updating our Fire Mitigation Plan.

As part of our planning process, fire mitigation projects have been evaluated for county priority. These revisions and reprioritization coincided with new WUI mapping by the Jerome District of the BLM for inclusion in the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) Fire Mitigation website. We have also documented all parties that have been involved in our amendment process and our Fire Mitigation Plan update meetings so that the collaborative nature of our effort can be demonstrated.

1. WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) DEFINED FOR JEROME COUNTY

Fuel modification work to protect habitats, cities and subdivisions throughout Jerome County was defined in our original Fire Mitigation Plan and has been a basis for grant applications to accomplish hazardous fuels mitigation work. In addition, an external boundary within which modifications of rangeland fuels would reinforce this work and help ensure its success in the event of a catastrophic wildfire is defined as the perimeter of the urban interface.

WUI perimeters, or defensible space, around home sites in urban or rural areas will change with fuel type and terrain based on updated WUI maps. The WUI map will determine defensive space perimeters for fire protection. Additional important factors used to determine defensible space will be weather conditions including wind, humidity and temperature.

Infrastructure also includes power and communication lines and towers, transportation routes for ingress, egress, and evacuation, rail lines and watersheds where citizen groups have organized for joint collection of water for domestic uses. In instances where topography immediately outside the WUI defense zone would allow “anchoring” to good fire control points, such as ridge tops or roads, the zone will be extended to that anchor point. Since determine of “best” location of the boundary of the WUI defense zone is dependent on local site situations, a mapped boundary will be created. Individual project planners will assess where this boundary will lie, in conformance with this written definition.

This “perimeter” definition will be useful to agencies in their efforts to continue hazardous fuels reduction projects that would make the protection of human habitations within the interface easier and safer.

2. WUI RATIONALE FOR JEROME COUNTY

Humans and their habitats are at greatest risk from catastrophic wildfire in periods that support extreme fire behavior. The observed fire behavior of rapid rate of spread, and heavy light fuels loading in recent fires near urban communities of Jerome County indicates that a major component of risk exposure is created by a combination of rate-of-spread and fuels loading in these fuel models.

Recent fires in Jerome County have had a tremendous rate of spread, ranging from one acre to several hundred acres per hour. We need adequate fuels modification work to successfully protect habitat and infrastructure in cities and rural fire districts like Eden, Hazelton, First Segregation, Jerome Rural Fire, and Jerome City, to reduce heavy light fuel loading conditions. A WUI designated perimeter around cities and communities at risk from catastrophic fire is needed. Hazardous fuels modification in the buffer zone would assist tremendously to the effectiveness of current Firesafe work around individual home sites.

As noted in our original plan, transportation routes for successful evacuation of residents at the same time fire crews and equipment are being deployed during a catastrophe are limited throughout Jerome County. Hazardous fuels treatments within the two mile zone along any of these routes would greatly reduce the potential that the routes would be cut off during an event.

3. INTEROPERABILITY

Interoperability, the ability for on-scene fire, medical and law enforcement units to immediately communicate with each other, is vital in the mitigation of emergency events. Present and future mutual aid and automatic agreements to utilize closest appropriate response units require the ability to quickly establish radio communications with all other response units for the planning and execution of the established mitigation plan. SIRCOMM supports these response units within the boundaries of Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Twin Falls, and Camas counties as well as assists the Bureau of Land Management and Idaho Department of Lands when operating with local agencies.

In order to accommodate this need a 700 MHZ trunked radio system is presently being designed. An engineering study was completed in mid February 2006. This study became the base document for soliciting grant resources to fund this consolidated, multi-jurisdictional radio system. Ada and Bannock counties are in the process of installing the same system and have made marked progress in doing so. A 700 MHZ trunked radio system in this area would allow interoperable communication capabilities to extend to both the western and eastern boundaries of the state of Idaho providing access to federal, state and local emergency response agencies.

Funding will be determined during 2006 in order to begin implementation of the radio system infrastructure in the year 2007. Based on the successful identification of funding sources, final system acceptance and full operability could be realized by late 2008 or 2009.

4. JEROME COUNTY FIRE UPDATE/NEEDS

Additional Goals

- Maintain the goals set in the 2004 mitigation plan.
- Work with the public in education of wild land fires.
- Work towards the funding of additional fire equipment needs.
- Work towards a county-wide burn permit policy.
- Establish better road signage and rural addressing.

Map Update

- Work with Twin Falls District BLM on WUI mapping needs.

Material needs

(See specific fire department needs).

Infrastructure Updates

(See specific fire department needs).

Rangeland Fire Education Needs

After the fire year of 2005 the County will be expanding the fire education program.

Put in place an education program in the high schools about wild land fires.

Continue to participate in the RED ZONE program and continue the program. It will help in determining the areas within the County that will need the most attention.

New Growth, Subdivisions, Structures, Homes

(See specific fire department needs).

Grants, Funding Assistance, Training

(See specific fire department needs).

Additional Areas

Continue to work with County homeowners to identify risks and provide recommendations for reducing fire risks.

Effects of Historic Fire Events, New Fire Effects

Fires in the County burned in areas that have a strong history of burning in the past. Only through education can the fire danger be reduced.

New Small Communities/Rural Fire Districts

(See specific fire department needs).

High Risk Areas

Blue Lakes Country Club

(See specific fire department needs).

Issues for fire Protection

Main issues for fire protection throughout the County are still education and equipment needs.

Fire District Updates (Resources)

(See specific fire department needs).

New Treatments, Additions (burns, Vegetative Control, etc.)
(See specific fire department needs).

Update County Wide Recommendations & Activities (5.1)

A very aggressive fire prevention program should be continued.
Radio communications through SIRCOMM need to be up dated.

Additional Supporting Information

Funding Equipment needs along with dispatch and radio communications along with County wide addressing updates need most of our support.

5. JEROME CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE/NEEDS

Additional Goals

Fire pre-planning areas of proposed annexation prior to annexation.
Updating and coordinating annexation areas with Jerome Fire Protection District One.
Evaluate annexation areas and their impact on the Cities I.S.O. rating, water supply, additional Fire Stations, apparatus and FTE's.

WUI Map Update

Update department's Wildland pre-plan and WUI mitigation map with Twin Falls District BLM.

Materials Needs

Obtain grants and or secure City funding through the City budget process to maintain and or purchase equipment such as;
Brush Hose
Brush Nozzles
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
Fire Shelters (Shelf Life)
Pumps and Tanks
Upgrade of existing Brush Truck(s)

Infrastructure Updates

Fire protection infrastructure within the City proper is well maintained and continues to be upgraded.
One 1975 Engine Apparatus needs to be replaced.
Fire flows (water required for fire protection) have increased in all areas of the City over the past five years.

Rangeland Fire Education Needs

There is no range land found within the City proper and or adjacent to the areas of annexation or impact. However, the danger of wildland fires continues to exist within the City. There is also a continued need for public fire education and prevention within the City.

New Growth, Subdivisions, Structures, Homes

In the area of fire protection, this type of growth is planned for through the permit and review process. Infrastructure is required prior too and or in conjunction with the building process.

It is possible that during the infrastructure installation process wildland fires could impact the department prior to the installation of access roads and water supplies (fire flows).

The Department has been impacted by commercial development building in the design as built and or fast track process. Because of this building process, not all the requirements for Fire Department access and water supplies (fire flow) take place as they normally would.

Grants, Funding Assistance, Training

As a City Department we find that grant money for wildland firefighting is being decreased and or eliminated. Past funding, provided the City the opportunity to develop and enhance its wildland response. Without that funding we wouldn't have the off road firefighting capabilities that we have today. Continued funding is needed if we are to continue a wildland program.

Federal funding was cut due to the lack of wildland responses that a City responds to when compared to a fire district. However, when an incident occurs, the level of City response is required just as it would in the fire district. It might be even more due to the possible exposures within a City as compared to farm or range land.

Mutual aid departments, non-mutual Departments and BLM need to drill together on an annual basis to maintain proficiency. As a City Department we are not in the loop due to the decreased chance that we would ever be contacted to respond. This is the exact reason why we do need to be included in these types of drills.

Additional Areas

Mutual aid is not used as much as it could be and or should be in some cases. By not contacting additional agencies at the opportune time allows fire growth and increased demands on equipment and manpower.

In some cases it may put our cities and or districts in bad way due to completely depleting our resources and not moving aid departments up to fill the empty stations and or to replenish manpower.

Effects of Historic Fire Events, New Fire Effects

We do have, and have planned for areas where numerous fires have taken place in previous years. The majority of these fires are human caused. However, they were not caused by events associated with the people residing within the area but others traveling through it.

Homeowners and occupants residing within the impact and annexation areas need to be contacted to make them aware of both, their provided fire protection and their potential fire hazards.

High Risk Areas

While our potential grass/brush fire areas are high risk. Most areas do require one or more of the following;

Suppression

Structure protection

Protection of out buildings (non-occupied buildings)

Protection of vegetation

Monitor the fire behavior (control the burn)

Mutual aid

Issues for Fire Protection

Mutual aid responses; departments that may respond to wildland mutual aid incidents should be aware of high hazard areas in their neighbors response districts. This information could be vital prior to and or during the initial mutual aid response. We should include mutual aid departments during the pre-planning stage.

Utilize existing, and develop new strategies for the procurement of land for future fire stations.

Utilize existing and develop new strategies for the procurement of fire apparatus.

Fire District Updates (Resources)

Station #2, Staffed 24 hours, 8,414 square feet

Station #3, Not Staffed, 3,750 square feet

Ten career personnel

One additional Captain (FTE) to be assigned to Station #1, 07/01/06.

New Treatments, Additions (burns, vegetative control, etc.)

Assist in the abatement of dry vegetation as requested and or directed by City management.

Continue the burn permit process within the City.

Update County Wide Recommendations & Activities (5.1)

Update Jerome City Wildland Pre-plan and mitigation map

Additional Supporting Information

Jerome City Wildland Pre-Plan and Mitigation map

6. JEROME RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENT UPDATE/NEEDS

Additional Goals

No changes.

WUI Map Update

Twin Falls District BLM will update WUI Map.

Materials Needs

The Jerome Rural Fire Department has needs for :

Brush Hose

Brush Nozzles

Personal Protective Equipment

Fire Shelters

Pumps and Tanks

GPS equipment for seven trucks and one command vehicle

GPS training

Infrastructure Updates

Brush Truck

Water Tender

New Station located at Crossroads Pointe

Continued training at the Southern Idaho Fire Academy

Training at State Fire School

Twin Falls District BLM wildland fire training

Rangeland Fire Education Needs

Continue partnership with the Mid-Snake RC&D with the implementation of REDZONE and REDZONE mapping.

Continue Fire Prevention education and information.

The MidSnake RC&D is the identified agency in our updated county fire plan as our partner in this program.

New Growth, Subdivisions, Structures, Homes

New subdivisions are being developed in Jerome County: They are Big Little Ranches, Sawtooth Acres, Country Club Estates, North End of Jerome County and the North East Farm area, this area is where the proposed coal fired power plant would be built. The trend to develop near the Snake River Canyon continues to complicate the WUI issues in Jerome County.

More than 5,000 acres are being annexed two miles north up to the Jerome/Lincoln County line, four miles east to highway 93, and south to Red Bridge road.

Grants, Funding Assistance, Training

Continued support to the Jerome Rural Fire Department with grants from the BLM Rural Assistance program, USFA Fire Act Grants, Homeland Security and Idaho Department of Lands grant programs.

Additional Areas

No changes.

Effects of Historic Fire Events, New Fire Effects

A major WUI fire occurred in the Bacon Pond area in 2004. Because of the expected growth from Crossroads Point and commercial expansions this area the need for equipment and resources will continue to be a need. We do have a partnership through mutual aid agreements with all but Twin Falls City and that continues to provide aid.

New Small Communities/Rural Fire Districts

No changes.

High Risk Areas

Snake River Canyon

Devils Corral

Bacon Pond

Big Little Ranches

Country Club Estates

North East Farm Area

North Jerome

Flat Top Butte

Issues for Fire Protection

Discussion needs to continue on the need for a wildland urban interface ordinance such as NFPA 1144 covering setbacks, greenspace, access and other Firewise issues to regulate growth with the county. Fire Districts in Idaho do not have the authority to regulate through ordinance.

Fire District Updates (Resources)

Jerome Rural Fire District has replaced a Type Six truck with a Type Four truck.

New Treatments, Additions (burns, vegetative control, etc.)

Big Little Ranches fuel reduction and restorative vegetation treatment have completed Phase 1 and are in the Phase 2 process.

North Rim Park and Northrim Fairways have been identified as areas that need hazard mitigation fuels treatment projects.

Update County Wide Recommendations & Activities (5.1)

No changes.

Additional Supporting Information

No changes.

7. FIRST SEGREGATION RURAL FIRE DISTRICT UPDATE/NEEDS:

Additional Goals

Maintain the goals set in the 2004 mitigation plan.
Work with the public in education of wild land fires.
Work towards the funding of additional fire equipment.
Work towards a county-wide burn permit policy.
Establish better road signage and rural addressing.

Map Update

Work with Twin Falls District BLM on mapping needs.

Material needs

Acquisition of a large capacity water tender.
Acquisition of a Type 1 structure engine.
Funding of the Fire Chief as paid compensated position.

Infrastructure Updates

After many wildfires in 2005 a lot of power lines in the area were damaged and needed to be replaced. Over the summer of 2005 more then 500 poles were replaced. The power was never lost because of the burned power poles.

Rangeland Fire Education Needs

After the fire year of 2005 the Fire District will be expanding the fire education program to include areas closer to the cities in the District.
Put in place an education program in the high school dealing with wildland fires.

New Growth, Subdivisions, Structures, Homes

No substantial changes within the Fire District.

Grants, Funding Assistance, Training

The Fire District is not pursuing any grants at this time.
The Fire District is working with other agencies in our training needs.

Additional Areas

Continue to work with all homeowners to identify risks and provide recommendations for reducing fire risks.

Effects of Historic Fire Events, New Fire Effects

Fires in the Fire District burned in areas that have a strong history of burning in the past. Only through education can the fire danger be reduced.

New Small Communities/Rural Fire Districts

The Fire District has no new small communities.

High Risk Areas

The Hunt area and North Wilson Lake areas are very high risk areas, for fuel in the area has had two good years of moisture and the fuel is very heavy.

Issues for fire Protection

Main issues for fire protection are still education and equipment needs.

Fire District Updates (Resources)

First Segregation Fire District has a new addition on the main fire station in Eden. The main building is 50 foot by 50 foot, and will hold three fire trucks. In addition, the building has a training room and District office.

First Segregation Fire District has put into service a new ATV for brush fire coverage in areas that other fire units were unable to respond.

First Segregation has put into service a thermal imager that has, and will help find hot spots in wildland fires.

New Treatments, Additions (burns, Vegetative Control, etc.)

First Segregation has been participating in the REDZONE program and will continue the program. It will help in determining the areas within the District that will need the most attention.

Update County Wide Recommendations & Activities (5.1)

A very aggressive fire prevention program should be continued.

Radio Communications through SIRCOMM need to be up dated.

Additional Supporting Information

Funding Equipment needs along with dispatching and radio communications along with County wide addressing updates need most of our support.

5. SIGNATURE PAGES

This **Amended Jerome County Wildland-Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan** has been reviewed in cooperation and collaboration with the representatives of the following organizations, agencies and individuals.

By: Veronica Lierman, Chairperson
Jerome County Commissioner

Date

By: Charles Howell
Jerome County Commissioner

Date

By: Joseph Davidson
Jerome County Commissioner

Date

By: Larry Craig
Mayor - City of Eden

Date

By: Darrell Dalrymple
Mayor – City of Hazelton

Date

By: Charles Correll
Mayor – City of Jerome

Date

By: Ron Vogt, Director
Southern Idaho Regional Communications

Date

By: Tim Duffner, Supervisor
Idaho Department of Lands

Date

By: Chris Simonson, FMO
USDI Twin Falls District BLM

Date

By: Ruth Monahan, Forest Supervisor
Sawtooth National Forest

Date

By: Donald Utt, Chief
First Segregation Fire District

Date

By: Joe Robinette, Chief
Jerome Rural Fire District

Date

By: Jim Auclair, Chief
Jerome City Fire District

Date

By: Travis Rothweiler, Chairman
Mid-Snake RC&D

Date

By: Clint Blackwood, Coordinator
Jerome County Disaster Services

Date

By: Danny J. Ebert
Project Leader, Jerome County WUI
Wildfire Mitigation Plan Amendment,
Lead Author
Enviros Consultants

Date